

HB 1997 - DIGEST

Finds that Washington lags behind the country and peer states in production of bachelor's and graduate degrees in the fields needed to invent new technologies, attract new businesses and new industries to the state, and spur economic development and job growth.

Finds that a key contributing factor to Washington's low production of high-demand degrees is the practice of funding student enrollment at universities based on an average cost per student, despite clear evidence that junior and senior-level courses in engineering and the hard sciences cost thirty to forty percent above the average, while junior and senior-level courses in fields such as business and social sciences cost thirty to forty percent below the average at the state's two research universities.

Declares an intent to establish a goal to increase course enrollment in engineering, technology, computer science, hard sciences such as chemistry and physics, and mathematics in order to double the number of degrees awarded in these high-demand fields per one hundred thousand population by the year 2015. The legislature further intends to accomplish this goal by increasing per-student funding for enrollment in high-demand fields by twenty-five percent, while decreasing per-student funding for enrollment in other fields by twenty-five percent.